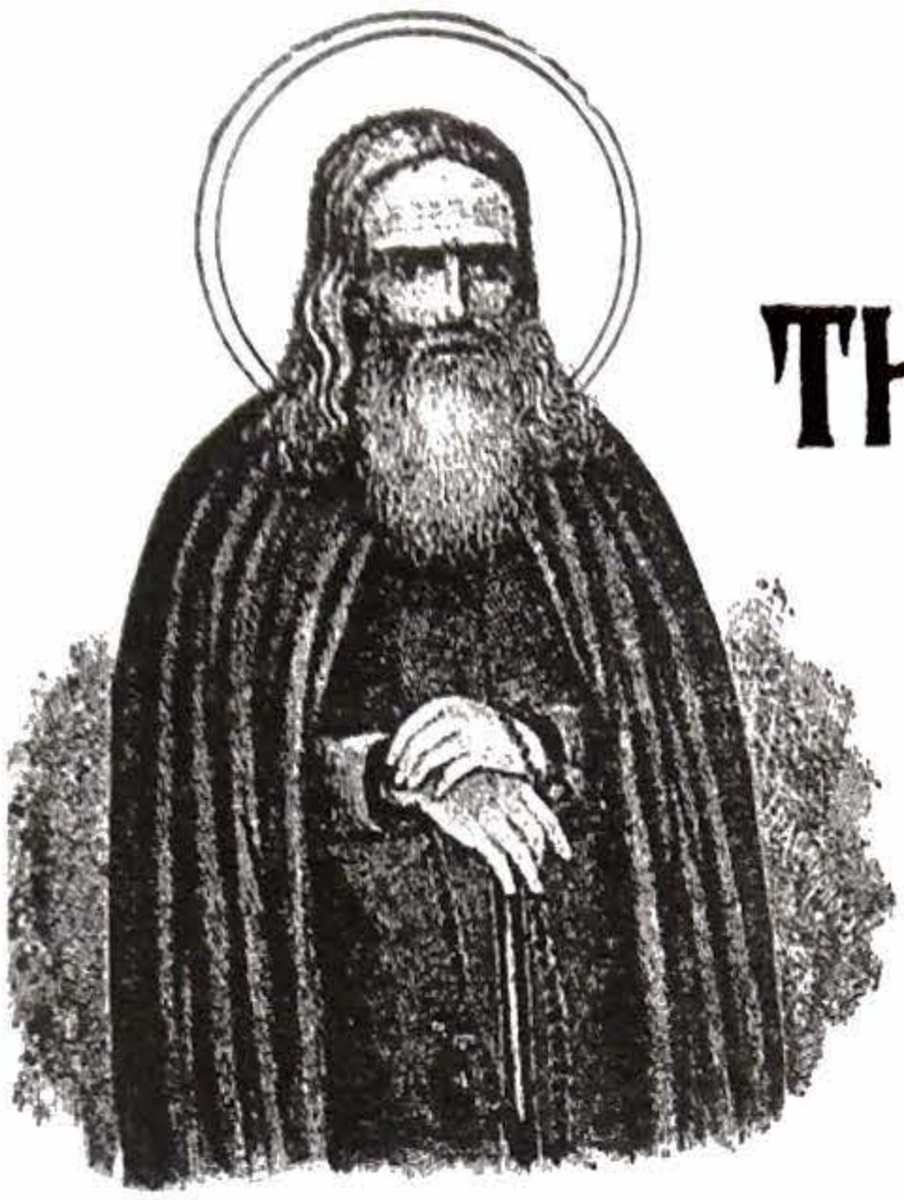
THE ORTHODOX WORD

MAY - JUNE, 1971

NINETY CENTS

Blessed XENIA
of Petersburg



THE ORTHODOX WORD

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OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF
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Established with the blessing of His Eminence the late *John* (*Maximovitch*), Archbishop of Western America and San Francisco, Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

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COVER: The chapel of Blessed Xenia in the Smolensk Cemetery in Leningrad (photograph by Vladimir Derugin): insert: the standard representation of Blessed Xenia.

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HOLY WATER

ON THEOPHANY, that is, the Day of the Lord's Baptism, every year a great miracle is performed. The Holy Spirit, coming down upon the water, changes its natural properties. It becomes incorrupt, that is, it does not spoil, remains transparent and fresh for many years, receives the grace to heal illnesses, to drive away demons and every evil power, to preserve people and their dwellings from every danger, to sanctify various objects whether for church or home use. Therefore Orthodox Christians with reverence drink Holy Water — a great Agiasma (holy thing), as the Greeks call it.

One should always have at home enough Theophany water so that it will last the whole year, and make use of it at every need: in cases of illness, leaving on a journey, whenever one is upset, students when going to examinations. They do well who daily, before eating any kind of food, drink a little Holy Water. It strengthens the powers of our soul — if it is done, of course, with prayer and reverence, and one does not merely expect from it a mechanical result.

Every priest should take care to bless a sufficient quantity of water for his church, so that it will be on hand for the course of the whole year for every need and to be given out to those who ask for it; and parishioners should provide themselves at Theophany with Holy Water for the whole year and even so that it can be kept for future years.

+ Archbishop John Maximovitch

Archbishop John Maximovitch
San Francisco, 1964

THE LIFE OF THE GREAT MARTYR

SAINT MAMAS

Translated from the Greek by the
Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Boston

CHRIST'S HOLY MARTYR MAMAS was born in Paphlagonia of Asia Minor in the third century. His parents Theodotus and Rufina were renowned, of a patrician family, both wealthy and esteemed by all, and radiant with Christian piety. Unable to hide for long their faith in Christ and fervent love for Him, they confessed their piety before all and turned many to Christ. For this reason, then, Alexander, the magistrate of the city of Gangra, informed against them, as he had received command from the emperor to spread and confirm by all possible means the worship of the pagan gods, and to torture and put to death all Christians who did not obey this imperial decree.

Alexander called Theodotus to judgement and began to compel him to make sacrifice to the idols, but the blessed one did not wish even to hear what the ruler said. Although Alexander desired to give over Theodotus to torments immediately, yet he was constrained by the fact of Theodotus' noble birth, for he did not have the right to dishonor and torture descendents of patrician families without special permission from the emperor. Therefore Alexander sent Theodotus to Cæsaria of Cappadocia to the governor Faustus. Now this Faustus was extremely hardened in his impiety, and as soon as Theodotus came, he shut him in prison. The wife of Theodotus, the blessed Rufina, also followed her husband, although she was with child at the time; she went into the prison together with him and there endured suffering for Christ. Now Theodotus knew the weakness of his flesh and perceived the terrible cruelty of his tormentor, but nonetheless he preferred to die rather than to offend in some way against piety. Yet, fearing that he would not possess the strength to endure the severe tortures awaiting him, he turned to God with fervent prayer, saying, "O Lord God of hosts, Father of Thy beloved Son, I thank and glorify Thee that Thou hast deemed me worthy to be cast into this prison for Thy name's sake. But I entreat Thee, O Lord, as Thou knowest my weakness, receive therefore my soul in this prison, that mine enemy might not boast against me."

THE HOLY GREAT MARTYR MAMAS

Commemorated September 2

KONTAKION, TONE 3

WITH the staff bestowed on thee by God, O Saint,* shepherd thy people in life-giving pastures,* and crush under foot unseen and untamable beasts* for those who sing to thee;* for all in misfortunes have thee as an intercessor, O Mamas.

And God, Who alone hath fashioned our hearts and understandeth all our works, heard His faithful servant and quickly sent unto him a blessed repose: leading his soul out of the prison of the body, He made it to abide in His radiant heavenly mansions. But Theodotus' wife, the blessed Rufina, enduring deprivation and suffering in the prison, and seized with great sorrow over the death of her husband, gave birth to a son before her time. Beholding her newly-born son, and the body of her husband lying lifeless, without breath, she prayed with compunction and tears to God thus: "O God, Who didst create man and from his rib didst fashion woman, command that I also journey the same path which my husband hath gone, and having freed me from this brief life, receive me into Thine eternal habitations. But this infant to which I have given birth, do Thou Thyself rear as Thou knowest, and be to him father, mother, and guardian of his life."

Calling thus upon the Lord in the time of her affliction, this venerable and holy woman was heard and freed from the bonds of the body; having given up her soul into the hands of the Lord, she departed into eternal freedom. The child, however, the great Mamas, remained alive between the bodies of his parents.

Then God Who foreknoweth all things sent in a dream an Angel in the form of a young man to a certain most illustrious and pious woman named Ammia, who was also called Matrona, and ordered her to seek out the relics of the saints, bury them with due honor, and take the child and rear him as her own son. She hastened to the governor to carry out the Lord's command and requested the bodies from him. God inclined the cruel heart of the ruler to mercy, and he did not hinder the renowned woman's desire. Entering the prison she found the relics of both the saints lying side by side, and between them a beautiful and joyful infant. She took the relics and buried them in her garden in a resplendent and honorable manner, and the child she took to herself. Ammia was a childless widow who lived in chastity; she loved the infant as though he were her own son and raised him a Christian.

THE CHILD GREW, but until his fifth year he never spoke a word. The first time he spoke was to Ammia, who was a second mother to him, and he said, "Mama";whence he was given the name *Mamas*. Ammia sent him to school to receive an education, and soon did he so greatly surpass all those of his own age that all wondered at his brilliance.

At that time the emperor of Rome was the impious Aurelian (270-275). He compelled all to worship the idols, not only adult men and women, but even small children; indeed, he paid special attention to children, imagin-

ing that because of their simplicity they could easily be deceived and dissuaded from piety. What is more, this impious one thought that if children became accustomed to eat meat offered to idols from their earliest youth, they would later become the more zealous idolators in their adult years. Hence by diverse enticements he would lead them to his own impiety. Many children and even young men succumbed to this deception and submitted to the will of the emperor. However, those who were fellow-students of the blessed Mamas imitated him and followed his instructions and did not obey the imperial decrees. For he demonstrated to his school fellows the deception of the pagan gods, which have neither life nor power, and he instructed them in the knowledge of the one true God, Whom he himself worshipped and to Whom he offered spiritual sacrifices, that is, a contrite spirit and a humble heart. Thus from his earliest years Mamas had the gray hair and wisdom and maturity of old age, an undefiled life (Wisdom 4: 9).

At that time the emperor sent a new governor named Democritus to Cæsaria to replace Faustus. He was a great zealot for his impious and godless faith and breathed persecution and murder upon the Christians. The blessed Mamas was denounced to him as not only not worshipping the gods himself, but also as corrupting the youths with whom he studied and teaching them the Christian faith. Mamas was at that time fifteen years old, and he was also an orphan once again, since his second mother Ammia had reposed in the Lord, having left great possessions to her adopted son and only heir. She had departed unto the heavenly riches which God has prepared for them that love Him. When Democritus heard of the renowned Mamas, he sent for him, and as soon as he arrived, he straightway inquired whether he were a Christian and if he not only did not worship the gods, but also dared to corrupt his schoolmates and companions by teaching them not to submit to the imperial decree.

The young Mamas fearlessly replied like an adult and full-grown man, "I am precisely that one who considers thy wisdom to be nothing. Thou hast turned aside from the right path and dost stumble about in such darkness that thou canst not even gaze upon the light of truth. Thou hast departed from the true God and drawn nigh unto demons, and thou now dost worship lifeless and deaf idols. I shall never renounce my Christ, and I endeavor to turn unto Him all whomever I can."

Astounded by such a bold reply from the blessed Mamas, Democritus became enraged, and perceiving that he could not persuade him by meekness, commanded that he immediately be led away to the altar of their god Serapis and there offer sacrifice, even if it were against his will. But Mamas did not

in the least fear the threat of the governor, and replied to him calmly, "Thou hast not the authority to punish me or to make these threats, for I am the son of parents of a renowned senatorial family."

Then Democritus inquired of those present concerning Mamas' lineage, and having learned that he was the descendent of ancient Roman nobility and that Ammia, a most illustrious and wealthy woman, had reared him and made him the heir of her vast possessions, he decided not to give him over to tortures, seeing that he did not have the right to do this. Rather, he bound him with iron fetters and sent him to the emperor Aurelian, who at that time was in the city of Ega, and wrote to the emperor concerning his actions.

When the emperor received and read the letter of Democritus, he ordered that the youth be brought before him. He employed much cunning, at times threatening him and at times promising him great honor and precious gifts, saying, "O splendid youth, if thou wilt draw nigh and make sacrifice to the great god Serapis, thou shalt live with us in the palace and be treated in a royal manner. All will revere and praise thee. Truly thou shalt be most fortunate. However, if thou dost not obey me, thou shalt bitterly perish."

But the courageous Mamas replied, "Let it not be that I should worship the lifeless idols which thou dost venerate as gods. How foolish thou art, to worship wood and stone which have no feeling instead of the living God! Cease to tempt me with cunning words, for when thou thinkest that thou doest unto me an act of kindness, in reality thou tormentest me; and when thou tormentest me, thou becomest my benefactor. Be it known to thee, therefore, that all the favors, gifts, and honors which thou dost promise unto me would become torture for me if I should love them instead of Christ; but those harsh torments with which thou threatenest me for the sake of the name of Christ, they shall be for me a great benefaction, since death for my Christ is dearer to me than all honors and possessions."

At this the enraged Aurelian commanded that the youth be beaten with rods. Although the delicate and tender body of the most-wise Mamas was torn by the blows, yet he endured all this without uttering a word, as though someone else were being tortured. The emperor tried to soften and change the mind of the youth even at the time of the beatings by saying to him, "Just say that thou wilt make sacrifice to the gods, and I shall immediately free thee from these torments." But the Martyr answered him, "Neither with my heart nor with my lips will I renounce my God and King Jesus Christ, even though thou shouldst give me ten thousand more wounds. These

wounds unite me with my beloved Lord, and I wish that the arms of my tormentors would never grow tired, for the more they beat me, so much the more do they store up riches for me with Christ the setter of the contest."

When Aurelian perceived that the great Mamas was not at all frightened by these tortures, he ordered that he be stripped and his body gradually burned with torches, in order that from the slowness he be made to feel the most harsh and bitter pain. Thus also was this severe torment applied to the indomitable youth, and the lighted torches were brought near unto his martyric body. Yet the fire reverenced the athlete of Christ and did not touch him, but rather turned back into the faces of his tormentors. When the tyrant beheld this and the unshakenness of the Martyr, it was he rather that was kindled and consumed with wrath, for the less attention the blessed Mamas paid to the fire, the more the emperor burned with rage. He then ordered that the Saint be stoned, but this suffering was so pleasant for the Martyr, who was sheltered with the love of Christ, that it seemed as though sweet-smelling flowers had been strewn upon him. Seeing that nothing could persuade the Saint and that he remained invincible through all the tortures, the emperor finally gave command that he be put to death by casting him into the sea. The servants of the emperor fastened lead weights about the Martyr's neck and led him to the sea. But neither at this moment did the Lord—Who hath commanded His Angels to keep us — abandon His servant, for suddenly there appeared upon the way an Angel whose countenance was like unto lightning, and with a human voice he threatened the soldiers, who became terrified and fled. The Angel then took the weight from around the neck of the glorious Martyr of Christ and led him to the top of one high mountain in the wilderness not far from Cæsaria and ordered Mamas to remain there.

ST. MAMAS began his life in the wilderness with a fast; he fasted for forty days and forty nights upon the mountain and was manifested as a second Moses. In a marvellous vision our Saviour bestowed upon him a shepherd's staff and the Holy Gospels. Then he built himself a small chapel in which to pray and read the Holy Gospels. At one divine command the godly Mamas gathered about himself wild beasts from the wilderness in which he abode, as a shepherd his sheep; they listened to him and obeyed him as though endowed with reason. He nourished himself on the milk of his animal companions and also prepared cheese not only for his own need but for the poor as well.

Soon the report of the blessed one spread throughout all of Cæsaria. At that time another governor named Alexander (different from the previous

one) ruled in Cappadocia; he, like his predecessors, was exceedingly cruel and impious. When he heard of the divine Mamas, he thought him to be a sorcerer and sent soldiers on horseback into the wilderness to seek him out and bring him before his presence. Now Mamas foreknew by the divine grace dwelling within him of the coming of these men, and therefore he descended a little way from the mountain and met them, and asked them whom they sought. Supposing him to be a shepherd who was tending sheep on the mountain, they replied, "We seek Mamas, who lives somewhere in this wilderness. Knowest thou him and where he might be?" "Why seek ye him?" answered Mamas. "It has been reported to the governor that he is a sorcerer, and therefore he has sent us to seize him and bring him for torture." Then the blessed one said to them, "I shall point him out to you, my friends, but first come to my dwelling to rest from your labor and refresh yourselves with some food."

The soldiers entered his hut, and he offered them cheese. While they began to eat with great appetite, the doe and wild she-goats gathered that the ascetic might milk them. Mamas offered the fresh milk to the soldiers to drink, while he himself stood apart at prayer. At this many more wild animals began to gather, and the soldiers became terror-stricken, cast aside their food, and hastened to the blessed one. He calmed them and, wishing to free them from their concern for finding him, declared unto them, "I am Mamas whom ye seek." But hearing this they replied, "If thou dost wish to come to the governor, then accompany us; but if thou dost not wish, then permit us to depart without thee, for we do not dare to take thee against thy will. And we entreat thee that the beasts do us no harm." Mamas reassured the soldiers and ordered them to go ahead, saying that he would soon follow them into Cæsaria.

Thus the servants of the emperor departed immediately from the presence of the divine servant of God and awaited his arrival at the gates of the city, for they wholly believed the words of such a marvelous man and could not think ill of him. Mamas took a lion with him and followed the soldiers to the city. When he drew nigh unto the city gates, he had the lion wait outside the walls, and he himself passed through the gates. The soldiers met and guided him to Alexander, who when he saw the Saint said, "Are thou the notorious Mamas the sorcerer of whom I have heard so much?" Mamas answered saying, "I am the servant of Jesus Christ, Who saveth those who believe on him and do His holy will, but Who delivereth sorcerers, magicians and those who worship idols unto eternal fire. But tell me, why didst thou

send for me?" "Because I cannot understand by what sorcery and magic thou hast so tamed wild and ferocious beasts that thou livest amongst them, and as I have heard, commandest them as though they were reasonable beings," retorted the governor. The Martyr said to this, "Whoever serves the one, true, and eternal God can never consent to live together with idol-worshippers and workers of evil, for he disdains both magic and idolatry. Therefore I have chosen rather to live with wild beasts in the wilderness than with thee in the habitations of sinners. Animals are tamed and obey me not through sorcery, as thou thinkest — for I do not even know of what sorcery is composed — but though they have not the gift of reason, yet they fear God and reverence His servants. But this is the thing worthy of wonder, that thou who hast before thee such an example still dost not wish to know the truth, showing thyself to possess less reason than they. Thou dost not worship the true God, and thou dishonorest His servants, torturing and murdering them mercilessly." The governor, inasmuch as he could not make answer to this, began to constrain the Martyr even more, saying, "Why hast thou become so impudent and foolish that thou resistest the commands of the emperor and shamelessly revilest us? Yet torments and punishments shall teach thee what is fitting." And he odered that the blessed one be taken out immediately, hung up, beaten, and raked with iron claws.

Christ's glorious Martyr, although he was grievously wounded, endured these things with such courage that it seemed as though he felt no pain whatever, for neither did he groan nor cry out, but only raised his eyes unto the heavens from whence he awaited succor. Seeing his perseverance, the godless Alexander commanded that he be raked with even greater cruelty. At this a divine voice was suddenly heard from heaven saying, "Mamas, be strengthened and take courage!" Many of the Christians who were standing in that place beholding the contest of the Martyr also heard this voice and were greatly strengthened in their faith. The holy Mamas, being perfectly fortified by this voice, paid no attention at all to the torments, although they continued to rake his body for a long time. Finally Alexander, suffering frenzy and rage and being more tormented in his heart than Mamas in his body, gave command to heat a furnace in which to cast the Martyr, and to take him out meanwhile and hold him in prison until it should be ready.

In the prison were forty other Christians; and as they had become weakened from hunger and thirst, Saint Mamas prayed, and behold, suddenly a dove flew through the window into the dungeon carrying in its beak food which was like unto a pearl in color and sweeter than honey. Having placed

the food before the Saint, the dove flew away out of the window. This substance was multiplied, as once also in the wilderness a few loaves of bread were sufficient to feed thousands. When the prisoners had partaken of this food, they were fortified and refreshed. Moreover, through the prayers of the divine Mamas, at midnight the doors of the prison were opened, and all the captives save Mamas departed.

After these things the governor called Mamas to the tribunal and said to him, "Because of our care for other matters we have given thee leisure that thou mightest consider what is to thine advantage; but if thou hast not yet come to thy senses, behold the furnace into which thou shalt be thrown." At this the brave Mamas replied, "O governor, I have already made known to thee my resolve; why then dost thou senselessly trouble thyself? Come, therefore, make an end and tarry not to execute those things which thou hast threatened." Hearing this, the governer cast him straightway into the furnace.

The All-good God, however, even as He once bedewed the furnace for the three youths, here also annihilated the power of the fire. The Martyr stood in the flames as though he were in a garden of abundant flowers washed with dew; for the whole period of time that he remained in the furnace he chanted and glorified God. After three days, when the fire was extinguished and the coals had become ashes, the governor ordered the executioners to bring out of the furnace whatever remained of the Martyr's body. As they approached the furnace they heard the divine Mamas glorifying God with a loud voice, and they immediately ran back in terror to make known unto the governor this supernatural wonder. But being darkened in mind, he said, "By the great Serapis and all the gods, this is clearly sorcery" — so foolish was this imperceptive one! But when such as were receptive to the light and the truth saw the athlete of Christ well and unharmed, they gave glory unto God Who works such miracles. While the most senseless governor, seeing the Martyr standing at the tribunal unshaken and having not even a hair of his head singed by the flames, called this sorcery and deceit. The great Mamas would not even make answer to the ruler.

The impious tyrant then commanded that the Saint be thrown to the wild beasts, that they might rend him to pieces, and to this end he was led to the arena. A hungry she-bear was loosed upon him. However, this bear approached the Saint, bowed down before him, and lay at his feet embracing them. Then they released a leopard, but it only embraced the neck of the Martyr, kissed his face, and thus wiped the sweat from off his brow. At that moment a lion sprang into the arena and ran towards the Saint, the same lion

THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. MAMAS
Sketch by Kontoglou of a fresco in the monastery of Barlaam, Meteora

that had accompanied him from the wilderness. The lion spoke to the blessed Mamas with a human voice — for manifesting His almighty power, God opened the mouth of the beast as once He opened the mouth of Barlaam's ass— "Thou art my shepherd who tended me on the mountain!" Having uttered this, he leaped upon the crowd, for there was present a numberless multitude of both pagans and Jews, adults and children. By God's will the gates of the arena locked themselves, and the lion mangled a great number of people, so much so that even the governor barely escaped death, and only a few others were able to flee the wrath of the beast which seized and tore all to pieces.

Afterwards the governor again laid hands on the Saint and confined him once more in prison for some while. Then for a second time he led him out into the arena and unleashed a most ferocious lion upon him, but this lion also became meek and lay at the feet of the blessed one. When the people beheld this, they gnashed their teeth from their great rage at the Saint and cried out to the governor, "Lead away the lion and we shall stone this sorcerer." Then they began to hurl stones at the Martyr. One of the pagan priests at the command of the ruler struck the Saint with a three-pronged spear in such a manner that his belly was opened and his intestines spilled upon the ground. The Martyr gathered them up with his own hands and walked out of the city. His blood, which poured forth like water, was collected by a certain pious woman in a vessel. Having gone about two furlongs from the city, he found a cave in a cliff and lay down there. Shortly thereafter he heard a voice from heaven calling him to the heavenly dwellings of the saints, and with great joy he gave up his holy soul into the hands of the Lord, for Whom he so valiantly had suffered, and to Whom be glory, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

IN THIS MANNER the great Mamas received the martyr's crown. His holy relics were buried at the place of his repose by the faithful, and many healings and miracles were wrought there, as is evident from a sermon to the Saint by St. Basil the Great. "Have the holy Martyr in remembrance, ye who live in this place and have him as your benefactor, ye who have been

helped by him at the calling of his name, who being in error have been guided unto life by him, who have been healed by him, whose children have been returned to life by him though they had died, whose life has been lengthened through his intercessions. Wherefore let us all come together in one body and praise the Martyr."

When Julian the Apostate was still a youth, he wished to leave a memorial of his piety, and he began to erect a magnificent church over the grave of the holy Martyr Mamas, although he did this not out of true piety but rather out of vainglory and hypocrisy. Then a most glorious miracle was seen. Whatever was built during the day was destroyed at night. The pillars that had been erected would fall into a heap; some of the stones in the wall could not be made to lie correctly; other stones became so hard that they could not be hewn; others turned into dust; the cement and the bricks were found each morning blown from their places as though scattered by the wind. Indeed this was a revealing of the impiety of Julian and a sign of his future persecution against the Church, for the Saint did not wish that a church should be built in his honor by one who would shortly afterwards raise a persecution against the true faith.

By the intercessions of Thy great Martyr Mamas, O Lord, deliver us from the teeth of the invisible foes, that we may glorify Thee together with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto the ages. Amen.

SAINT MAMAS the Martyr has always been one of the more well-known and beloved saints of the East. St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory the Theologian, and others have written panegyric homilies in his honor, he being a native of their own country. He is especially revered by shepherds, and considered their patron.

In Constantinople a famous monastery was built in the Saint's honor by Pharasmanes, the chamberlain of the Emperor Justinian; it was completed and enriched by Gordia, the sister of the Emperor Maurice (582-602). The monastery was located in the western part of the city, close to the gate Xylokerkou (now Belgrad Kapi). In 809 the Emperor Nicephorus I (802-811) put Sts. Theodore Studite, his uncle Plato, and Joseph, Metropolitan of Thessalonica, confessors for the holy icons, under house arrest in this monastery for some years.

In the middle of the tenth century St. Symeon the New Theologian became its abbot, and continued as such till 1005.

There are accounts of the existence of the monastery and its reorganization, restoration, etc., through the period of the Latin conquest and the sack of the city by the Crusaders (1204), up to the fall of the city to the Turks in the 15th century.

In the days of the Emperor Isaac II Angelus (1185-1195), the head of the Saint was brought by a monk from Cæsaria, and the monastery was restored. It is reported that St. Anthony of Novgorod saw the relic there in 1200. The Emperor John Cantacuzenus became a monk there in 1350.

After the Latin conquest of Constantinople the head of St. Mamas disappeared, and it was thought that like so many other relics it was carried off by the Crusaders, although it was never reported to have been seen in the West. A few years ago, however, when extensive restoration was undertaken on the Church of the Holy Resurrection (the Holy Sepulchre) in Jerusalem, and the main Holy Table was being dismantled, the head was found along with other holy objects which had evidently been used as relics for the consecration.

There was also a great shrine of St. Mamas housing some of his relics on Cyprus from ancient times. Frescoes of St. Mamas are to be found in the monasteries of Meteora and the churches of Mistra as well as many other places. The Saint is depicted as a youth holding a shepherd's crook and carrying a young fawn in his arms. Sometimes he is depicted riding a lion.

An oral tradition reached the days of St. Basil the Great that when St. Mamas would go out to milk the does, they would race one another in order to be first to reach the Saint, so familiar were they with him.

There is a prayer of St. Mamas which is read when animals are sick. In America relics of the Saint are to be found, among other places, at the Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Boston and at the Brotherhood of Saint Herman of Alaska near Platina, California.

Bishop Victor of Glazov

VICAR OF VYATKA

BISHOP VICTOR (Ostrogradsky) was the son of a church chanter. He entered a monastery early in life and spent many years there. Nonetheless, he acquired also a good theological education and in 1912 published a detailed study on "The New Theologians," criticizing a new theological trend that had found expression particularly in the book of Metropolitan (later "Patriarch") Sergius, *The Doctrine of Salvation* (Kazan, 1898).

After the Revolution of 1917 he was a vicar bishop of the Vyatka diocese, with the title of Glazov and Votkinsk, with his headquarters in Vyatka. In 1922 he was arrested and was in prison until 1925. When the "Declaration" of 1927 came out his was the first voice of protest, and his flock joined him in separating from Metr. Sergius, which led to his arrest and incarceration in the concentration camp of Solovki, where he was from 1928 to 1930, working as a bookkeeper at the rope factory a mile from the main kremlin of the former monastery of Solovki. The little house where he lived and worked was located in a clearing of the forest; deep within this forest he celebrated secret church services with other members of the Catacomb Church.*

In Solovki, despite the tragic state of Soviet Russia, Bishop Victor preserved an optimistic view of the future and even tried to infect with this the more realistic Bishop Maxim of Serpukhov. But within a few years this optimism apparently vanished, for a witness who saw him in the spring of 1931 at the concentration camp of Mai Guba in the Far North heard him say: "Ahead there is nothing but suffering." In the summer of the same year he was released from this camp and exiled for three years to the bank of the Onega River in the Archangelsk region, where, according to some reports, he was in contact with the catacomb hierarchs, Metropolitan Joseph and Bishop Damaskin. Late in 1933 he was sent to an even more remote exile in Siberia, and after this nothing more was ever heard of him.

But if little is known of the life and sufferings of this new confessor,

* See *The Orthodox Word,* 1970, no. 3, p. 160.

The Epistles of Bishop Victor

THE SERGIANIST SCHISM OF 1927

9. LETTER TO METROPOLITAN SERGIUS

Document of December 16, 1927

Your Eminence, Merciful Archpastor, Most Revered and Dear Vladika.

IN OCTOBER, with the love of a son, I had the boldness to express to Your Eminence my sorrow over the ruinous destruction of the Orthodox Church which had been begun "as a principle of administration."

Such a destruction of the Church of God is the entirely natural and inevitable consequence of the path on which your "Declaration of July 16" has placed you, a "Declaration" which for us humble and God fearing and for all Christ-loving people is completely unacceptable.

From beginning to end it is filled with painful untruth, and it is a mockery, deeply disturbing the soul of the faithful, against the Holy Orthodox Church and against our standing in confession for God's truth. And through a betrayal of the Church of Christ to the derision of the "profane," it is a most painful renunciation of one's own salvation, a renunciation of our Lord and Saviour Himself.

This sin, as the Word of God testifies, is not less than any heresy or schism, but is rather incomparably greater, for it plunges a man immediately into the abyss of destruction, according to the Unlying Word: *Whosoever shall deny Me before men...* (St. Matt. 10: 33).

In so far as it has been in our power, we have guarded ourselves and our flock, that we may not be participants in this sin, and for this reason we sent back the "Declaration" itself. Acceptance of the Declaration would have been testimony before God of our disinterest and indifference with regard to the Most Holy Church of God, the Bride of Christ.

Out of fear of God I now find unacceptable also your decree concerning my transference: "I fear" — as one hierarch writes me — "lest an expres-

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his courageous and uncompromising spirit is set forth in the documents which he has left behind, which accuse Sergianism as a profound error that denies the very nature of the Church of Christ. (Source: Polsky, *Russia's New Martyrs,* vol. 2; the "15 Questions" are from a manuscript copy.)

sion of obedience on our part be considered by 'them' (the Synod) as an approval of what 'they' have done." And therefore, if I were presented complete freedom of movement — which I do not have, being administratively banished — I would then ask myself: will I not have to answer before God for this obedience, for in essence it joins me to people who have separated themselves from God. And that the "Declaration" in fact is worthy of many tears, and that it separates a man from God — concerning this I have set forth my thoughts separately in the form of a letter to friends, which is here enclosed.

And what of the future? For the future I would pray the Lord — and not only I, but the whole Orthodox Church as well — that He may not harden your heart, as once He did the heart of Pharaoh, but may give you the grace to acknowledge the sin you have committed and to repent for life. Then all the faithful with joy and tears of thanksgiving to God would again come to you as to a father, pastors as to a chief pastor, and the entire Russian Church as to her sacred head. The enemy lured and seduced you a second time* with the idea of an organization of the Church. But if this organization is bought for such a price that the Church of Christ herself no longer remains as the house of grace-giving salvation for men, and he who received the organization ceases to be what he was — for it is written, *Let his habitation be made desolate, and his bishopric let another take* (Acts 1: 20) —then it were better for us never to have any kind of organization.

What is the benefit if we, having become by God's grace temples of the Holy Spirit, become ourselves suddenly worthless, while at the same time receiving an organization for ourselves? No. Let the whole visible material world perish; let there be more important in our eyes the certain perdition of the soul to which he will be subjected who presents such outward pretexts for sin.

But if the hardness of your heart has gone far, and there remains no hope for repentance, even for this outcome we have a text to enlighten us: *Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not their uncleanness; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty* (II Cor. 6: 17-18).

The Brother in Christ of Your Eminence, Most
Revered Archpastor, the sincerely devoted
Bishop Victor

* Metr. Sergius had joined the 'Living Church,' and then 'repented' (*tr. n.*).

10. A LETTER TO FRIENDS

Document of December, 1927

Take heed, that ye be not deceived.
St. Luke 21: 8

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all!

MY BELOVED FRIENDS! With great sorrow of heart I tell you of a new deceit, through which our enemy the devil wishes to entice away the souls of Christians on to the path of perdition, depriving them of the grace of eternal salvation. And this deceit—woe to us sinners—is much more bitter than the first three: those of the Living Church, the Renovationists, and the Gregorians, whose madness was apparent to all without difficulty, whereas not everyone can see through the ruinousness of the latest deceit, and this is especially difficult for those whose mind and heart are turned toward earthly things, for the sake of which people become accustomed to renouncing the Lord. But let everyone know that the latest Declaration of July 16|29 of this year of Metropolitan Sergius — is a clear betrayal of the Truth (St. John 14: 6).

Whom have the signers of the "Declaration" betrayed, and whom have they renounced? They have renounced the Most Holy Orthodox Church, which is always and in everything pure and holy, having in herself *not spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing* (Eph. 5: 27). They have brought forth against her an open judgment before the entire world; they have bound her and given her over to the derision of the "profane," like an evil-doer, like a criminal, like a betrayer of her Most Holy Bridegroom, Christ—Eternal Truth, Eternal Justice. What a horrible thing...

The Holy Church, which the Lord *hath purchased with His own blood* (Acts 20: 28) from out of this world, and which is His Body (Col. 1: 24), and for all of us is the house of eternal grace-given salvation from this life of perdition — now this Divine Holy Church of Christ is adapted to the service of interests not only foreign to her, but even completely incompatible with her Divinity and spiritual freedom. Many Christians step forth as *enemies of the cross of Christ,* says the Apostle; they *mind earthly things* (politics), forgetting that *our dwelling is in heaven* (Phil. 3: 18-20) — *for here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come* (Heb. 13: 14). And what kind of unification can there be of the Church of God with the civil authority, whatever kind it may be, when the aims of the latter's activity are exclusively in a material-economic direction, and while externally these aims might be moral but are foreign to faith in God or even hostile to God. At the same

time, the aims of the Church's activity are exclusively spiritual and moral, and through faith in God they bring a man beyond the bounds of earthly life for the acquiring of God's grace of eternal heavenly goods. *Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God* (St. James 4: 4).

Therefore the Church of Christ by her very nature can never be any kind of political organization, or else it ceases to be the Church of Christ, the Church of God, the Church of eternal salvation. And if now through the "Declaration" the Church is united to the civil regime, this is no simple external maneuver, but, together with a terrible outrage, a destruction of the Orthodox Church, there is also committed here the monstrous sin of renouncing the Truth of the Church, a sin which no attainments of earthly goods for the Church can justify. Do not tell me that in this way a Central Administration has been formed and local administrations are being formed, and the appearance of external calm for the Church is obtained, or, as the Declaration says, "a legal existence of the Church" — all those who earlier were caught by our enemy the devil and fell away from the Orthodox Church also love to say these and similar things. But what is the benefit if we ourselves, having been made and being called temples of God (II Cor. 4: 16), have become worthless and abominable in the eyes of God, while receiving an external administration for ourselves? Rather, may we never have any kind of administration, may we wander, even having nowhere to lay our head, after the fashion of those of whom it was once said: *They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy; they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth* (Heb. 11: 37, 38). But by means of such sufferings may Orthodox souls be preserved in the grace of salvation, of which all they are deprived who are caught by the devil with such external pretexts. *Woe unto the world because of offences, for it must needs be that offences come*; every soul is to be tried and every place sifted, so that the grain may be separated from the straw, even if in small quantity, since there are few *chosen*, said the Lord; *but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!* (St. Matt. 18: 7). But let us, my friends, give no offence to the Church of God, that we may not be condemned at the Lord's Judgment.

Take heed that ye be not deceived; for many shall come in My name... and shall deceive many, warns the Lord (St. Luke 21: 8). And the holy Apostle, showing his care for us, says: *See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil* (Eph. 5: 15, 16).

May the Lord not harden the hearts of those who signed the Declaration, but may they repent and turn and may their sins be washed away. But if it be not so, then let us guard ourselves from communion with them, knowing that communion with those who have fallen away is our own renunciation of Christ the Lord.

My friends, if we truly believe that outside the Orthodox Church a man has no salvation, then when her truth is perverted we cannot remain her indifferent worshippers in the dark, but we must confess before everyone the truth of the Church. And if others, even in an innumerable multitude, even chief hierarchs, remain indifferent and can even use their interdictions against us, there is nothing surprising in this. After all, this has happened not infrequently in the past, and thus it was four years ago that those who had fallen away from the truth composed councils and called themselves the Church of God and, pretending to be concerned over canons, made interdictions against those who did not submit to their senselessness; but they did all this to their shame and to their eternal perdition.

But the Lord is faithful, Who shall stablish you, and keep you from the evil one... And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ (II Thes. 3: 3, 5).

Bishop Victor

11. THE REPLIES OF BISHOP VICTOR TO 15 QUESTIONS OF THE GPU ON THE "DECLARATION" OF METR. SERGIUS

Document of January 18, 1928

The questions themselves have survived only in the form of brief indications, if at all. Some of the replies, containing duplications or relating more to the political aspect, have been omitted or shortened.

1. "How would you interpret, from the civil and ecclesiastical points of view, the appearance of the new church tendency — the platform of the Declaration of July 29, 1927?"

From the ecclesiastical point of view: as an incorrect teaching on the Church and on the matter of our salvation in Jesus Christ — an error of principle by Metropolitan Sergius....

2. "How do you look at the 'Declaration'? etc."

The "Declaration" is a separation from the truth of salvation. It looks on salvation as on a natural moral perfection of man; it is a pagan philosophical doctrine of salvation, and for its realization an external organization is absolutely essential. In my opinion, this is the same error of which, as early as 1912, I accused Metropolitan Sergius....

I myself grew up among simple people, the son of a church reader, and I have spent my whole life among simple people, in monasteries. As the people believes, so believe I, namely: We believe that we are saved in Christ Jesus by the Grace of God; this Grace of God is present only in the Orthodox Church and is given to us through the Holy Sacraments, and that the Church herself is the house of grace-given salvation from this life of perdition, not some kind of political organization. As a grace-giving union of believers, the Church can be without, and it should not have, any political organization among its members; the Roman Catholic Church teaches otherwise. The Church's members, as citizens, have a political civil organization common for everyone, where they are in dependence on the civil authority.

3. The Synod appeared without the blessing of Metr. Peter, who is the temporary head of the Russian Orthodox Church. Metr. Sergius, in convening it, exceeded his authority; he was entrusted only with a temporary guardiancy of the Church, a satisfaction of the pressing spiritual needs of the faithful; but he began a complete overhaul of the Church. He is not the master of the House of God, but only a guardian of the House; therefore my relationship to the Synod and to its whole platform is negative.

4. The question of the Synod's membership does not have a great significance as far as its unacceptability is concerned. Its very platform is unacceptable, for it sees in the Church an external political organization, which it unites with the civil organization of the regime of the USSR, and conformably with this it sees a political activity for the Orthodox Church, and in this way it pushes the Church on the path toward more shocks and unexpected happenings, and together with this it perverts *the very nature of the Church.* By her inner nature the Church should be not of this world, and precisely by virtue of those spiritual interests which she satisfies for her faithful members. She is a grace giving union for the grace-given salvation of believing citizens.

5. I propose to keep myself separate from the Synod until a part shall be taken in Church life by Metropolitan Peter or Metropolitan Cyril, in whose *Orthodoxy* I have no grounds to doubt.

6. "On further development of the battle against the new tendency."

I personally, both up to this time and in the future, have no intention of waging any kind of battle, and I only defend myself and my flock so that we will not be partakers of the sins of others, of the "Synod." To those near to me who appeal to me concerning the new tendency of Church life, I explain it as I myself understand it. Farther than this the matter has not gone and, I think, will not go, in view of the fact that I am too insignificant a person in

(*Continued on page* 123)

The Counsels of the Elder Nazarius

IV

ON PRAYER, ESPECIALLY IN CHURCH

EXAMINE, O beloved brother, the following counsel, which serves for the salvation of our souls: At midnight unfailingly arise before morning worship, stand before God, and pour out to him your wholehearted prayer for some time, in the way that will be indicated below.

When the time for morning worship arrives, with all zeal arise and hasten to the beginning of the Church's Divine service; and having come to church for the common prayer, stand in the appropriate place, collect all your mind's power of thought, so that you will not dream or fly away in every direction, following evil qualities and objects which arouse our passions.

Strive as well as you can to enter deeply with the heart into the church reading and singing and to imprint these on the tablets of the heart.

Pay heed without sloth, do not weaken in body, do not lean against the wall or a pillar in church; but put your feet together straight and plant them firmly on the ground; keep your hands together; bow your head toward the ground and direct your mind to the heavenly dwellings.

Take care, as well as you can, that you do not dare, not only to speak about anything, but even to look at anyone or anything with the eyes. Pay attention to the church reading and singing, and strive as much as possible not to let your mind grow idle.

If, in listening to the church singing and reading, you cannot understand them, then with reverence say to yourself the Prayer of the Name of Jesus, in this way: *Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.* Strive to put this prayer deeply into your soul and heart; say it with your mind and thought, do not allow it even for a short time to depart from your

lips; unite it as well as you can to your breathing and with whatever strength you have strive at the same time to force yourself to heartfelt contrition, so that you will repent of your sins with tears. If there are no tears, there should at least be contrition and moaning of heart. See to it that the church services do not proceed without this.

At the same time, strive to preserve a deep silence, so that during the singing or reading or listening you may have an undistracted mind, a faultless heart, and pure thoughts; because through this you can sate your soul with spiritual food, which is the Word of God.

At the same time, do not exalt yourself, but be humbled (St. Luke 14: 11); *for the Lord opposeth the proud, but unto the humble He giveth grace* (Prov. 3: 34).

Implant this in your heart and soul, and diligently watch lest you exalt yourself. And if from this you receive tears, then strive that these tears might serve for the benefit of your soul and might wash away your impiety and iniquities.

In such repentance and wisdom of humility you should remain always, praying and expecting that the grace of God might visit your soul from above with divine illumination.

I beg you, O lover of virtue: accept all these words with heartfelt love and place them as the foundation of your virtue. For whoever desires to live devoutly and please God does every work of God not carelessly, but with zeal and fervor, that he may be the sooner transfigured into a perfect man in the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ.

Standing in God's temple, picture to yourself that you are in heaven itself, that you stand before God with the higher powers and do with them everything that they do. In picturing this to yourself, make a rule for yourself that under no circumstances will you leave church before the end of the service.

If you stand thus perfectly in order as said above, and from this standing you become very tired, or you become exhausted from some bodily illness or old age, then sit wherever there is a place in church, in order not to tempt your brother.

Examine yourself, whether it be not despondency or laziness that make you tired, whether it be not distraction of mind and bodily passions that make you lose your strength and manly courage. Reflecting thus, accuse yourself of impatience, of infirmity, of weakness, of laziness, and again be ashamed before God and His angels and men, and reflect in your conscience that *he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved* (Mk. 13: 13).

If while standing in prayer you become completely unable to endure some natural necessity, or if some great affliction strikes you, accuse yourself likewise, just as written above.

Or if you leave church on an obedience assigned to you, even then reflect within yourself, with self-effacement, that you have been deprived of remaining with and enjoying the presence of inhabitants of heaven.

And if you will thus reflect and accuse your own soul, and if you endure unto the end, you shall proceed from strength to strength and shall receive invisibly from God health of body and enlightenment of soul.

V

CONCERNING THE TIME AFTER CHURCH SERVICES

ON LEAVING CHURCH for your cell at the end of the services, take care as much as possible not to stand with anyone or say anything. And above all preserve yourself from harmful idle talk and laughter; but go quickly to your cell, not ceasing to utter with the lips of your mind and thoughts the Prayer of the Name of Jesus.

Having come to your cell, close the door and, if you can, stand and with fervor, attentiveness, and thanksgiving pray a little for yourself, your parents, benefactors, and for the whole world; make several prostrations or bows with prayer.

After this take a book and read a little.

If you are exhausted from toil or illness or old age, as said above, and have not the strength to fulfill this, then, for these reasons, you can omit these labors; and instead of them pray a little sitting or lying down with the prayer rope.

After doing all this, arouse your mind and thoughts with prayer, as much as you can; take care lest your thoughts soar off to objects not useful or harmful to the soul.

Thus should you do and guard yourself unfailingly after every church service. Having rested a little and done what is set forth in this instruction, if for bodily labors you have some work assigned to you or a general obedience, take it up as if it had been assigned you from Christ himself, and not from a man. Therefore, arise quickly, serve with love, labor without murmuring, wearing out your flesh.

If you have no work assigned to you, do whatever handiwork you have, or by reading a book fill and instruct your soul, or do anything else that does not hinder our salvation.

Pay special heed to this: that you be never idle in your cell. For idleness is the first teacher of every evil, and if it becomes rooted in a person, he will have to undertake many labors in order to root it out.

While performing the above mentioned handiworks or obediences, with whatever strength you have, preserve on your lips, in your mind and thoughts, prayer and most precious and soul saving silence; and at the same time guard yourself as much as possible from looking off to the side, which distracts the mind, deceives the feelings, and not infrequently also burdens your conscience and soul.

Strive as much as possible to pay heed to yourself, to keep attentive vigil over your soul and feelings, and likewise over the handiwork or obedience with which you are occupied.

Guard yourself lest you be in any way tempted by seeing anything or anyone, or hearing anything, and lest you judge your neighbor in anything or do anything brazenly against. him. Flee brazenness like poison, for it is most harmful to a man and leads him to haughtiness.

Do always what is commanded you, or what you have previously been blessed to do regularly, or what is asked you; but by yourself do not dare to undertake anything in general, whatever it may be.

By this rule governing yourself thus or preparing yourself for obedience, should you be performing an obedience and there be someone else with you on the same obedience, then bow low to him with humility, and say the prayer in a low voice. Having received a blessing, do the obedience as indicated above with prayer, with love, with zeal and full attention. Do it not as if before men, but absolutely as before God and His angels; for you are not working for men, but are laboring for God Himself. Reflect that everyone who does the work of God carelessly is accursed, and is a pleaser of men; and preserve yourself as well as possible from carelessness and pleasing men.

(*Continued from page* 118)

comparison with Metropolitan Sergius and the Synod. And besides, I do not consider myself capable of any kind of administrative, organizational activity, since I have never had any experience of it.

7. "On the aims..."

Solely the salvation of one's soul, since I believe that they, the "Synodalists," are destroying Orthodoxy, making it worldly, making it earthly and completely perverting the nature of the Orthodox Church.

8. "On methods and manners of battle, etc."

I have not had any definite method and manner of battle at all. I, together with several, not all, priests and laymen, have declared to Metropolitan Sergius that we reject his spiritual guidance, unless he acknowledges his mistake of dragging the Church into worldly tasks not proper to her, and thus renounces his "Declaration" of July 29.

9. "How has the battle been waged?..."

Up to the present time there has been no battle in the precise meaning of this word. We have only separated ourselves from those who declare to us: "We are your superiors, and therefore we put you under interdict for disobedience," and the like. However, as concerns the pastors and laymen subject to me, and all the more anyone else, I have not undertaken any kind of interdictions, threats, curses, deprivations, or the manifestation of any kind of malice, and I will never do so, because the matter of faith, of salvation, is a matter of freedom, of conscience, of choice, and not coercion.

12. I am a servant of salvation, and those who seek their eternal spiritual salvation can always find in me help in clarifying the truth. But as it seems to me, the simple people who fear to fall away from Orthodoxy are more interested in this, while the pastors, unfortunately, remain more indifferent and disinterested, even though they are theologically educated.

13. "On watchwords, etc."

The Orthodox Church is the sole grace-giving Church, in which by God's grace our salvation from this life of perdition is accomplished. The falling away from Orthodoxy of the "Renovationists," as well as the perversion of the nature of the Orthodox Church by the "Synodalists," deprive a man of the grace of salvation.

14. "On the unity of the Church and its relation to the Government."

The unity of the Church can be only one of grace, and not of the civil sphere; for us, according to the word of God, place, nationality, etc., make no difference. An Orthodox Japanese is just as dear to me as an Orthodox Russian.

A purely political civil organization of the faithful is possible only as an auxiliary tool of the civil authority, as was the case before the Revolution. The government alone knows the whole external life of a man, while the Church knows only the exclusively spiritual needs of the faithful as well as everything pertaining to prayer. We do not protest against the decree on the separation of Church and State, but unfortunately the Government does not believe the sincerity of our declarations of this.

12. A LETTER TO PASTORS (EXCERPTS)

Document of February 28, 1928

Whosoever of you are justified by the law, are left without Christ; ye are fallen from grace.

Gal. 5: 4

AND THIS THEIR FALL is not a small one, nor hidden, but very great, and evident to all who have the mind (of Christ) (I Cor. 2: 16); and it was revealed in the well-known "Declaration" of July 16|29 and in the brazen destruction of the Orthodox Church which has followed upon it.

The "Declaration" of those who have fallen into deception is an abominable barter of the priceless and unbarterable, that is, our spiritual freedom in Christ (St. John 8: 36); it is their attempt, in contradiction to the Word of God, to unite what cannot be united: the lot of the sinner with the work of Christ, God and Mammon (St. Matt. 6: 24) and light with darkness (II Cor. 6: 14-18). The apostates have converted the Church of God from a union of grace-given salvation for man from sin and eternal perdition, into a political organization, which they have joined to the organization of the civil authority in the service of this world which lies in evil (I John 5: 19). Quite another thing is the loyalty of individual believers with relation to the civil authority. In the latter condition the Church preserves her spiritual freedom in Christ, and believers become confessors when the faith is persecuted; but in the former condition the Church is only an obedient tool for the realization of political ideas by the civil authority, and confessors for the faith are thus manifested as state criminals.

All this we see in the activity of Metropolitan Sergius, who, by virtue of his new relationship to the civil authority, is compelled to forget the canons of the Orthodox Church; and in defiance of them he has removed all bishop-confessors from their sees, considering them state criminals, and in their places he has arbitrarily assigned other bishops who are not acknowledged and cannot be acknowledged by the believing people. For Metropolitan Sergius there

now can no longer be the very phenomenon of confessing for the Church, and therefore he declares in his interview in connection with the Declaration, that any member of the clergy who shall dare to say anything at all in defense of the Truth of God against the civil authority is an enemy of the Orthodox Church. What is this but the madness that has seized one who has fallen into deception? For, if we reason thus, we shall have to consider as an enemy of God, for example, St. Philip, who once accused Ivan the Terrible and for this was strangled; and even more than this, we must number among the enemies of God the great Forerunner, who accused Herod and for this was beheaded.

...This is why St. Maximus the Confessor, when the attempt was made to persuade him and to force him by terrible tortures to enter into communion in prayer with the false opinioned patriarch, exclaimed: "Even if the whole universe shall enter into communion with the Patriarch, I alone will not." Why was this? Because he feared to lose his soul through communion with a patriarch who had been drawn into impiety, even though at that time he had not been condemned by a council, but on the contrary was defended by a majority of the bishops. For the administrative authority of the Church, even when assembled in council in earlier times also, has not always defended the Truth, of which there is clear testimony in the cases of St. Athanasius the Great, St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil the Great, St. Theodore the Studite, and others. How then can I remain in future senselessly indifferent? This cannot be. And this is why we have set ourselves upon the only possible way out of our present situation — the path of confessing the Truth of salvation. This path is difficult, it is a path of struggle; but we do not hope in our own powers, but rather look to *Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith* (Heb. 12: 2), and our work is not a separation from the Church, but a defense of the Truth and a justification of the Divine commandments, or what is even better, the guarding of the whole economy of our salvation. This is why a whole array of archpastors has stepped forth accusing Metropolitan Sergius: Metropolitans (Joseph, Agathangel, Arsenius), Archbishops, Bishops, and a multitude of individual pastors, who declare to Metr. Sergius that they can no longer acknowledge him as the guide of the Orthodox Church, but that for the time being they will govern themselves independently.

See to it, then, my friends and fellow pastors, that you be not drawn away by the spiritual beasts. The previous fall, not long ago, is sufficient; now we shall walk circumspectly. May *the peace of God, which passeth all understanding* (Phil. 4: 7) fill your hearts and minds and may it direct your path in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Bishop Victor (seal with initials)

Blessed XENIA of Petersburg

AND HER CONTEMPORARY MIRACLES

"May whoever has known me remember my soul, for the salvation of his own soul. Amen."

BLESSED XENIA'S TESTAMENT

XENIA, THE BLESSED FOOL FOR CHRIST of 18th century Petersburg, even though she has never been officially canonized, enjoys today a popularity exceeding by far that of most canonized saints. Holy Russia was very sensitive to the sanctity achieved by means of one of the severest forms of asceticism — when the ascetic gives up to God not only the will, but also the mind, the faculty of sanity as accepted by the standards of this world. Xenia achieved great sanctity as a fool for Christ, as the fruits of her labor attest, even posthumously — an abundance of miracles.

During the whole of the 19th century Xenia was greatly venerated in Russia and was an obvious candidate for canonization. With the exile of Russians to many corners of the earth after the Revolution, her veneration went together with them. Today almost every list for the commemoration of the dead has her name next to those of the immediate relatives. Her memory is dearly cherished also by many non-Russians. In Greece, where an icon of her has been printed, members of the Old Calendarist Church recently appealed to the Synod of the Russian Church Outside of Russia to hasten her canonization. A splendid service to her, in anticipation of her future canonization, has been written by Valery Hoecke, whose previously written services and akathists, 20 in number, have been approved by the Russian Synod Abroad, beginning in 1938. This service was published for private use in 1968 from a manuscript in the archives of the late Archbishop John Maximovitch.

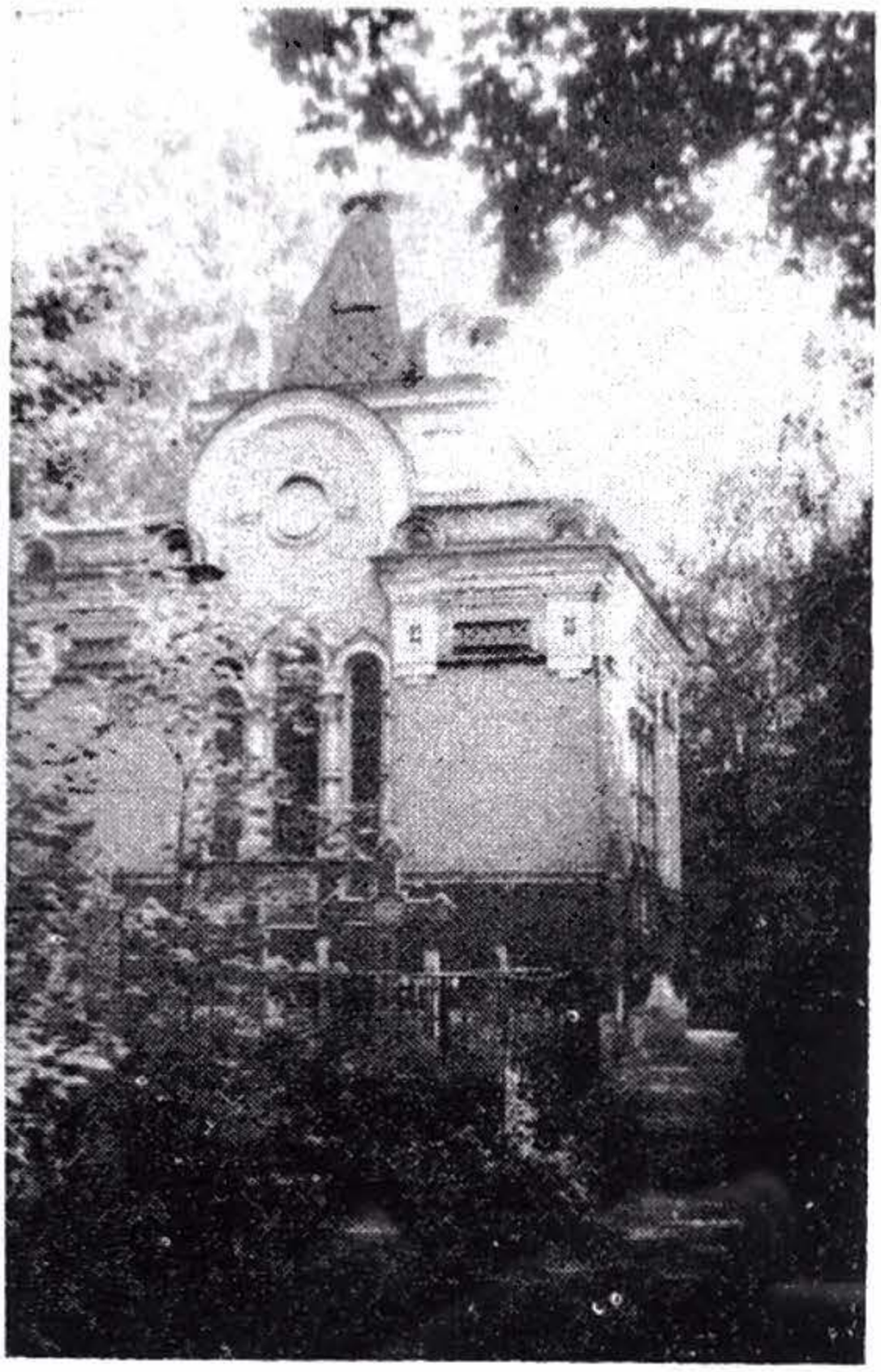
In contemporary Russia, too, the memory of Blessed Xenia is alive and flourishing. Here is the report of a recent exchange student to the University of Leningrad, Vladimir G. Derugin, himself a venerator of Blessed Xenia:

"If one gets off the bus at Detskaya Street, one cannot fail to notice a long wooden fence that stretches the whole length of the block. In spring and summer there may be seen behind this fence a marvellous grove of birch trees; in winter these trees are covered with a blanket of snow. There are many holes in the fence and several openings. If one looks through one of these holes one

The earliest known representation of
BLESSED XENIA OF PETERSBURG
Commemorated on January 24

KONTAKION, TONE 3

A WANDERING stranger on a foreign earth,* ever sighing for the heavenly homeland,* thou wert known as a fool by the violent and unbelieving,* but as most wise and holy by the faithful,* and wert crowned by God with glory and honor,* O Xenia, manly in mind and divinely wise.*
Wherefore we cry to thee:* Rejoice, O blessed one,* for after earthly wandering thou hast come to dwell in the Father's House.



The sealed chapel
of Blessed Xenia

Xenia — by the new confessor,
Nun Mariamna of Kiev

may see very run-down graves and crosses. This is the Smolensk Cemetery in our day. Amidst the tall birches and willows one can only rarely see a grave in good condition. Almost all the crosses are broken or crudely damaged, and some graves have no crosses at all. For years now bands of Communist Youth (Komsomol) have been attacking these crosses, trying to break or mutilate them. After such vandalism some old women try to repair everything they can with their own hands and their meager funds.

"Within the cemetery stands the Church of the Smolensk Mother of God. It is absolutely hidden in the dense grove; from the street it is invisible. This church is frequented by elderly and middle-aged women. The whole year round groups of beggars stand outside, a clear testimony of the Soviet socialist paradise. They stretch out their hands, sorrowfully begging: 'Give alms, for Christ's sake.' They are all old, sick, dressed in rags and with such sad eyes, as though their whole lives long they had seen and borne the most frightful and painful afflictions, and are now meekly awaiting the end of their tortures.

"But it is not only for alms and for the church services that believers come to the cemetery, but likewise to pray at the chapel of Blessed Xenia. The chapel stands separately from the church. About seven years ago it was closed by the Soviet authorities. It is not known whether the relics of Blessed Xenia are still there or have been stolen by the Soviets. But the sealed chapel,

without crosses or windows, does not in the least disturb the faithful. The whole year round they come to the chapel, adorn it with flowers (which are frightfully expensive in Leningrad) and willows, and then long and fervently, almost always with tears, pray in front of the chapel, frequently making the sign of the cross and bowing low. And sometimes, if several believers have gathered, they softly read or sing prayers."

XENIA GRIGORIEVNA PETROVA, 26 years old and wealthy, was happily married when suddenly her husband died at a drinking party without receiving the Church's last rites. This shock opened her eyes to the spiritual world: in order to follow Christ, she gave away her house and literally everything she had and, homeless, even at night, wandered the streets of the capital's poorest neighborhoods, deep in prayer, as a madwoman for the remaining 45 years of her life. She put on her husband's clothes, and when they wore out she dressed in rags, always in two colors: red and green, the colors of his uniform. She insisted that everyone call her by her husband's name, Andrei Feodorovich, since "Xenia is dead" and not her husband, for whose soul she constantly prayed. For all this God gave her the gift of helping people by clairvoyant advice, warning, consolation, and a power of miraculous healing. She died between 1796 and 1806, but her miraculous help, coming now from another world, continues up to this day. The following testimonies of this help were collected and verified by the St. Herman Brotherhood.

DELIVERANCE FROM THE ABYSS OF DEATH

Theodore G. Huene of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, is a living witness of Blessed Xenia's miraculous intervention in his life from beyond the grave. Through her prayers he was literally "pulled out" from the abyss of death both physical and spiritual; for he was among the dead and rose to witness the truth of the Orthodox Faith.

T. Huene, a Lutheran from Russia, for many years suffered from an ulcer which no medical treatment helped. On July 19, 1952, he began to bleed internally, was taken to the hospital, and underwent an emergency operation, during which his heart stopped beating and he "died." However, after some minutes of heart massage, the heart began to beat again. His wife and children outside were informed that ten minutes is the longest that the heart can be without beating; "but we don't know exactly how long your husband's heart failed to beat," concluded the doctor. The interval of death was evidently longer than this, for oxygen had been cut off from the brain too long and as a result the process of brain decay had already set in, with

symptoms of the death agony. Even if by some chance he were to survive, his brain would be permanently damaged. His wife, who was then an Orthodox Christian only in name, writes: "The next day he had convulsions; he was strapped to the bed, and the frightful agony began. He was unconscious for over a week. During this time a friend, Mrs. Barbara Girillovich, suggested that we have a panikhida served for Blessed Xenia, saying, 'You will see that in half an hour he will feel better.' She gave me a little bottle with a piece of cotton inside; the bottle had once contained oil from the lamp over Xenia's grave, and the cotton had once been soaked in it. She told me to make the sign of the cross on my husband's forehead and chest and then place the bottle under his pillow. We didn't know at all who this Xenia was, but I at once ordered a panikhida to be served in church, asking also on my own part that a moleben be served to the Kursk Icon of the Mother of God, since I had heard that many had received help through this Icon. This was done right away. Half an hour after the services had been sung, my husband opened his eyes for the first time, pronounced my name, and asked for 'oil.' I thought he was hungry ('oil' and 'butter' are the same word in Russian) and wanted to eat, but he said faintly, 'Now I feel better,' and then I understood and anointed him again, making the sign of the cross — and he quietly fell asleep. From that day on he started to get better."

The first time his daughter saw him after he regained consciousness, he told her with radiant joy: "I saw angels; I will live now," and he kept asking that some "blue icon" be shown to him. When he had regained strength after some time he recounted the following: He felt that he was somewhere in the midst of dark tunnels, struggling over pipes in deep ditches where it was terribly cold. He was about to sink into some dark pit when an old woman in men's clothing, in a short jacket and long boots, appeared on the surface above. She took him by the hand and tried several times to pull him out. Every time that he felt he was sinking down into the marsh she would pull him, until finally she pulled him out of the pit into the light. There he saw how she was dressed and that she was pulling a sled on which there was a blue icon of the Mother of God. The woman came to an unfinished church and began to haul bricks on her sled to the scaffolding. "I asked her if I could help, but she said that she had to do it herself," concluded Mr. Huene, who knew nothing at all about Xenia. Only after a visit by Archimandrite Anthony (now Archbishop of San Francisco), who brought him a booklet on the Life of Blessed Xenia with a picture of her, did he realize who she was, as he exclaimed with thanksgiving: "That's the woman I saw."

His recovery proceeded with astonishing rapidity. Mrs. Huene writes: "When we were leaving the hospital the head nurse was moved to tears, since

no one in the hospital thought that my husband would live. The doctor, when I thanked him, said: 'Do not thank me; it was someone above me.' And on August 26, the day of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk and the Apodosis of the Transfiguration, my husband was received into the Orthodox Church, and he now takes an active part in church life, being an assistant to the church warden."

Relatively recently Mr. Huene was able to see for the first time the original Kursk Icon when it was visiting the Edmonton diocese. With awe he beheld and immediately recognized this splendid and truly wonderworking Icon, adorned with a glittering bright blue riza, just exactly as he had seen it in the other world, being carried by Blessed Xenia, who, with a "foolishness" above this world, opened to him the doors of eternal salvation — granting to us a glimpse of God's unfathomable mercy to mankind.

Witnessed and verified by: Mr. and Mrs. T. Huene, Mrs. Eugenia Pafnutieff, Mr. and Mrs. Girillovich, Mr. and Mrs. D. Horvath

QUICK HELP IN RESTORING HEALTH

My husband, S. P., was ill and lay in bed, groaning from terrible pains in the whole stomach. Three times during the night Dr. M. had been called, and he had given him injections for the pain, but they had not helped. By 7 a.m. the pains had not ceased, and I called Dr. Chernikh, a surgeon, who came and gave another injection for the pain and immediately sent my husband to the French Hospital. Other doctors were called: Dr. Khrenov, Prof. M. Viki, and two French doctors, but in no way could they help my husband. For ten days he suffered from pains and 16 X-rays were taken. On the tenth day the doctors discovered stones in the kidney, which had stuck in the ureter; the kidney was swollen and an operation was necessary immediately in order to remove it. But Dr. Khrenov did not advise an operation, since my husband's heart was bad and would not survive it. My husband asked me to take him home, which I did without the doctor's permission.

An hour later Dr. Chernikh telephoned and asked why my husband had left the hospital, when the operation had to be made as soon as possible, or else the kidney would burst and cause uremia. I replied that my husband was tired from the pains and wanted to rest four days at home from all the tests and X-rays, and then he would return. I remembered Blessed Xenia. I had an image of her praying on her knees; I put it under his pillow, saying: "Ask Blessed Xenia to pray to the Lord for you to be saved from the operation." I also went to my room, prayed, and asked her help. After half an hour I approached my husband, and he said that the pains had decreased. I said: "Keep begging her! Blessed Xenia is helping you." An hour later he fell asleep without any medicines and slept until morning.

In the morning he got up, saying that he would no longer go to the hospital. At four o'clock I began to get ready for work, when I saw him coming out of the bathroom and saying to me: "Come quickly and look!" He was carrying something on a saucer. I became frightened, thinking it was blood from the kidneys, but he was carrying three large round stones, which had come out without pain or blood. I immediately telephoned Dr. Chernikh. He said to me: "This could only be a miracle!" He came that same hour, examined the stones, and Prof. Viki, a kidney specialist, likewise examined the stones and was astounded. In his entire practice Dr. Chernikh had never had such a case, and the professor likewise, when such large stones could come out, and even without blood or pain. Dr. Chernikh said: "This is a miracle!" I affirmed to him that the Blessed Xenia had helped my husband when I prayed to her. Her image was under his pillow. I always thank Blessed Xenia for her miracles.

San Francisco, California, 1960 *Capitolina P.*

AN INTERVENTION AND PROMISE

When I was a girl my father, General Shipov, was suffering terribly from attacks of angina pectoris, so that my mother and I had to take turns keeping watch near his bed. Once my mother said to me: "Go and rest, and I'll stay with father." I was terribly tired and very much upset over my father, for I believed he was dying, and I literally fell on my bed from exhaustion and fell into a deep sleep. Immediately I dreamed that I saw an old woman, dressed in rags over men's clothing. And she told me: "I am Xenia. Your father will become well, and you will be happy in life." When I woke up I asked our nanny who this Xenia might be, but she did not know and asked the porter, who told us about a Blessed Xenia whose holy remains were buried in the Smolensk Cemetery, and that many people hasten to her intercession in prayer. We went to the Smolensk Cemetery and had a panikhida served for her. And indeed the words of the blessed one came true: my father became well, and I was happily married and after the bloody Revolution have lived a long and happy life in the free world. My youngest daughter I called Xenia, and she takes good care of me now in my old age.

Berkeley, California, April, 1969 *Helen N. Besack*

QUICK HELP IN FINDING WORK

The Blessed Xenia with her holy prayers helps us sinners all the time. Here is what happened recently. After our church services Saturday night, a young man, a student, asked that a panikhida be served for Blessed Xenia,

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Orthodoxy in the Contemporary World

THE "LOCAL COUNCIL" OF THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE: NEW STEPS IN AN INTERNATIONAL OFFENSIVE

THE "LOCAL COUNCIL" of the Patriarchate of Moscow, convened on May 30 at Holy Trinity-St. Sergius Monastery near Moscow to elect a new "Patriarch" of the "official" (Sergianist) Russian Church, achieved its task without controversy and without any pretense of freedom. Metropolitan Pimen of Krutitsk was elected "unanimously": the delegations of all 73 dioceses when called produced his name alone, and no other name was mentioned. Thus the pattern of Soviet "elections" was scrupulously followed, as it had been at the Patriarchal "elections" of 1943 and 1945.

But of more interest than this success of the obvious candidate of the Soviet government is the use that was made of the Council by the government to promote its ecclesiastical-political program abroad. The following statement by Archbishop Nikon of Washington and Florida, Vice-Chairman of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Church Outside of Russia, describes this well.

The Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow and the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad

According to the Soviet Press (*Golos Rodiny,* No. 47 (1515), June, 1971), the so-called "Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church," convoked in Moscow by the Soviet Government to proclaim the new, State-picked Patriarch of Moscow, devoted considerable attention as well to the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. The Council, as quoted by *Golos Rodiny,* passed the following resolution:

"In view of the fact that the activities of followers of the so-called 'Russian Orthodox Church Abroad' (the Sremski-Karlovci schism) against the Russian Orthodox Mother Church and against the Holy Orthodox Church as a whole do damage to Holy Orthodoxy, the Higher Ecclesiastical Authority of the Moscow Patriarchate has decided to bring about the necessary canonical sanctions in the near future concerning this band of apostates, the Karlovci schism and its unrepentant followers, so that the Church might have a clear legal position regarding them and so that no one might have the slightest doubt at any time, and the faithful might be protected from these spreaders of schism and temptation, and avoid them (Romans 16: 17).

"The closed group of politically-minded reactionary churchmen, with its center in the USA and calling itself 'The Russian Orthodox Church Abroad' consists of a remainder of the once numerous 'Karlovci schism,' which arose on the initiative of clergy who had fled the Fatherland together with the defeated White Army. Today, as before, these clerics are more involved in political provocation than in church affairs and therefore the resolution of the Local Council regarding the setting up of canonical sanctions against them will be approved by all honest clergy and laity." To such an extent is the Moscow Patriarchate, or rather, the Soviet Government, disturbed by the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad.

During the past fifty years of the existence of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad such denunciations by the Moscow Patriarchate, at the demand of the Soviet Government, have been made more than once, during the time of Patriarch Sergius, who established an impious collaboration with the atheistic Communist State, as well as under his successor Patriarch Alexis, but these excommunications not only had no significance for devout Russians, both abroad and in Russia itself, but on the contrary raised and strengthened the authority of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, as the unshakeable defender of justice in the Church and as the voice of Russian Orthodoxy, renouncing collaboration with godless Communism.

Further on, the Resolution mentions the service of the Moscow Patriarchate to the atheist State, covered up by its concern for the "defense of peace." "We live in a troubled time," to quote the Council's address to Christians of the whole world, "a time when the military conflicts arising in various parts of the world and the sources of international tensions not only bring grief and deprivations to the peoples directly involved, but carry a real threat of growing into a worldwide outbreak, which with modern methods of warfare could lead to a universal catastrophe. This situation in the world," declares the Moscow Patriarchate, "is the direct product of the reactionary, hate-filled policy carried out by imperialism, aiming at world power. This is the cause of much loss of life and terrible suffering among the peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, as well as the military crisis and trying situation in the Middle East.

"This Council," it goes on, "has called upon all Christians to unite their efforts to avoid the threat of another World War, to strengthen friendship, mutual understanding and collaboration among all peoples, to fight for the termination of American armed aggression in the internal affairs of the peoples of Southeast Asia, to achieve Israel's renunciation of her expansionist

policy, so that peace and justice might triumph in the Middle East, and to try by all measures to make peace permanent in Europe..."

All of this ecclesiastical cooperation with the spreading of godless Communism throughout the world is covered up in these words: "In his speech on the part taken by the Russian Orthodox Church in the struggle for peace and in the Ecumenical Movement, Patriarch Pimen said, 'One should not see in peacemaking and ecumenism something new and foreign to the Orthodox Church in the previous steps of her historical existence. The Church from Her very beginning has preferred peaceful paths for the resolution of international conflicts and has condemned aggressive wars of seizure.'"

Indeed, the Orthodox Church always prays for "the peace of the whole world." But the activities of the Moscow Patriarchate in collaboration with the Communist regime are directed to the opposite goal — the establishment throughout the world of the satanic rule of Communism. Despite her concern for the sufferings caused by "American imperialism" in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, about the disarmament of Europe and other aims of the atheistic Soviet government, the unfortunate Moscow Patriarchate is unable to say a single word in defense of her own enslaved and long-suffering Russian nation, and betrays it by her silence. The forthcoming Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad will say its own heartfelt and truthful words on this subject.

July 8, 1971 *Archbishop Nikon*

Does one still need to wonder why the Communist government tolerates the Moscow Patriarchate? While persecuting the Orthodox faithful, it *promotes* the Patriarchate — as long as this will prove advantageous to it — as its "ecclesiastical" partner in the conquest of the world. In 1970 the Patriarchate achieved for Communism the neutralization of the American Metropolia, whose delegates meekly attended this Slave Council of 1971 and gave favorable accounts of it in the *free* press of America (e.g., see *Svit* for July 19, where Fr. Dimitry Grigoriev justifies even the statements on "American aggression" as "tribute to Cæsar"!). Now it is time to finish with the rest of the Russian emigration: those who cannot be bought must be joined to Moscow by threats, or else cast out of communion with the official Orthodox Churches, representatives of virtually all of which were shamelessly present at the Moscow Council.

But here, surely, there is something beyond politics. This new assault against the Russian Church Abroad is not merely a political attack made in order to threaten and silence Russian emigrants; it is also an ecclesiastical attack against the last remaining free voice of genuine Orthodoxy. The Russian

Church Abroad is the only free Orthodox Church to speak boldly out against the Moscow-Constantinople program of renovationism, uniatism, and chiliasm. By crushing her, Moscow thinks to crush the very conscience of Orthodoxy, removing also the last foreign support to its own persecuted Catacomb Church, as well as to the confessing Church of the True Orthodox Christians (Old Calendarists) in Greece.

Nonetheless, Christ our Lord has promised to be with His Church even to the end of the age, and the anathemas of the atheists and their puppets will be of no effect, but will only fall back on their own heads. In this act, and in all else that it did and said on the international stage of its "Local Council," the Moscow Patriarchate has only confirmed the words of the confessor Boris Talantov, who died in prison for speaking the truth about the Patriarchate: "The activity of the Moscow Patriarchate abroad represents a conscious betrayal of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Christian faith. It has stepped forth on the world arena as a secret agent of worldwide anti-Christianity."

BLESSED XENIA OF PETERSBURG

(*Continued from page* 132)

hoping to receive from her prayers help in finding a job as an architect, which is something very difficult to get now. Since I sing in the choir, I took part in this panikhida and also prayed to God not to put us sinners to shame, but that the request be fulfilled by the prayers of Xenia, so that faith might be strengthened among young people. And merciful indeed is God!

The very next day the young man approached me and said: "Thank you for singing the panikhida. I have already gotten a job. I planned to go looking for a job only tomorrow. but today I was called by telephone and offered work. So I received a job with very good pay and conditions."

Glory be to God!

Australia, July 16, 1969 — *Anastasia Pavlov*

O XENIA the glorious,* as a wise virgin in the midnight of thy life* thou didst go out to meet the Bridegroom Christ,* carrying a lamp aflame with love of God;* named a fool by the world,* thou wert filled with wisdom beyond the world.* Wherefore take not away from us the oil of mercy* which thou hast richly acquired,* as we faithfully celebrate thy memory,* but shed upon us drops of it,* healing our wounds.

From the Service: Sticheron, Tone 8
(*Special melody: O most glorious wonder!*)

CAN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH ENTER

A "Dialogue" with Non-Christian Religions?

INTRODUCTION

OURS IS A spiritually unbalanced age, when even many Orthodox Christians find themselves *tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive* (Eph. 4: 14). The time, indeed, seems to have come when men *will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be inclined unto fables* (II Tim. 4: 3-4). One reads in bewilderment of the latest acts and pronouncements of the "ecumenical" madness. On the most sophisticated level, Orthodox theologians representing the American Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops conduct a learned "dialogue" with Papists and issue a joint statement on the Eucharist (*Diakonia,* 1970, no. 1, p. 72), setting forth six points of "remarkable and fundamental agreement," noting at the end some "serious differences... which now prevent us from communicating in one another's churches," without even raising the one "difference" that is substantial and that renders such "dialogues" utterly futile: that the Eucharist within the Orthodox Church is a sacrament and grace-giving, and outside the Orthodox Church it is an empty ritual without grace, a blasphemy. Or again, Orthodox representatives gather with Papists and Protestants at St. Vladimir's Seminary for an annual "Ecumenical Institute on Spirituality" without the slightest inkling of a realization that what can be "discussed" with heretics is most certainly not Orthodox spirituality, of which they can have had no experience, but only an academic caricature of it (St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly, 1969, no. 4, p. 225). Yet again, the third unofficial consultation of theologians of the Orthodox and Monophysite ("non-Chalcedonian") Churches, meeting in Geneva in August, 1970, concludes that "on the essence of the Christological dogma our two traditions, despite 15 centuries of separation, continue to find themselves in full and profound agreement with the universal tradition of the one and indivisible Church," the heresy which the Holy Fathers anathematized being a matter of "different terminology," and

it points the way for a "declaration of reconciliation" between the two bodies which will involve, for example, the abrogation of all Orthodox statements against the Monophysite heretics (this would entail the rewriting of the Orthodox service books), although the Orthodox need not go so far as to recognize these heretics as saints, while allowing the Monophysites, however, to do so (*Episkepsis,* Sept. 29, 1970).

On the level of action, ecumenical activists take advantage of the fact that the intellectuals and theologians are irresolute and unrooted in Orthodox tradition, and use their very words concerning "fundamental agreement" on sacramental and dogmatic points as an excuse for flamboyant ecumenical acts, not excluding the giving of Holy Communion to heretics. And this state of confusion in turn gives an opportunity for ecumenical ideologists on the most popular level to issue empty if not idiotic pronouncements that reduce basic theological issues to the level of cheap comedy, as when Patriarch Athenagoras allows himself to say: "Does your wife ever ask you how much salt she should put in the food? Certainly not. She has the infallibility. Let the Pope have it too, if he wishes" (*Hellenic Chronicle,* April 9, 1970).

The informed and conscious Orthodox Christian may well ask: where will it all end? Is there no limit to the betrayal, the denaturement, the self-liquidation of Orthodoxy?

It has not yet been too carefully observed where all this is leading, but logically the path is clear. The ideology behind ecumenism, which has inspired such ecumenistic acts and pronouncements as the above, is an already well-defined heresy: the Church of Christ does not exist, no one has the Truth, the Church is only now being built. But it takes little reflection to see that the self-liquidation of Orthodoxy, of the *Church of Christ,* is simultaneously the self-liquidation of Christianity itself; that if no one church is *the* Church of Christ, then the combination of all sects will not be *the* Church either, not in the sense in which Christ founded it. And if all "Christian" bodies are relative to each other, then all of them together are relative to other "religious" bodies, and "Christian" ecumenism can only end in a syncretic world religion.

This is indeed the undisguised aim of the masonic ideology which has inspired the Ecumenical Movement, and this ideology has now taken such possession of those who participate in the Ecumenical Movement, taking the place of Christianity in them, that "dialogue" and eventual union with the non-Christian religions have come to be the logical next step for today's denatured Christianity. The following are a few of the many recent examples that could be given that point the way to an "ecumenical" future *outside of Christianity.*

A "DIALOGUE" WITH NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS?

1. On June 27, 1965, a "Convocation of Religion for World Peace" was held in San Francisco in connection with the 20th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations in that city. Before 10,000 spectators there were addresses on the "religious" foundations of world peace by Hindu, Buddhist, Moslem, Jewish, Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox representatives, and hymns of all faiths were sung by a 2000-voice "interfaith" choir.

2. The Greek Archdiocese of North and South America, in the official statement of its 19th Clergy-Laity Congress (Athens, July, 1968), declared: "We believe that the ecumenical movement, even though it is of Christian origin, must become a movement of all religions reaching towards each other."

3. The "Temple of Understanding, Inc.," an American foundation established in 1960 as a kind of "Association of United Religions" with the aim of "building the symbolic Temple in various parts of the world" (precisely in accord with the doctrine of Freemasonry), has held two "Summit Conferences." At the first, in Calcutta in 1968, the Latin Trappist Thomas Merton (who died suddenly in Bangkok on the way back from this Conference) declared: "We are already a new unity. What we must regain is our original unity." At the second, at Geneva in April, 1970, eighty representatives of ten world religions met to discuss such topics as "The Project of the Creation of a World Community of Religions"; the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, delivered an address calling on the heads of all religions to unite; and on April 2 an "unprecedented" supra-confessional prayer service took place in St. Peter's Cathedral, described by the Protestant Pastor Babel as "a very great date in the history of religions," at which "everyone prayed in his own language and according to the customs of the religion which he represented" and at which "the faithful of all religions were invited to coexist in the cult of the same God," the service ending with the "Our Father" (*La Suisse,* April 3, 1970). No Orthodox delegates were apparently present at this convocation, but Orthodox ecumenists were represented by Dr. Blake, with whom they pray at WCC meetings.

4. Early in 1970 the WCC sponsored a conference in Ajaltoun, Lebanon, between Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, and Moslems, and a follow-up conference of 23 WCC "theologians" in Zurich in June declared the need for "dialogue" with the non-Christian religions. At the meeting of the Central Committee of the WCC at Addis Ababa in January of this year, Metropolitan Georges Khodre of Beirut (Orthodox Church of Antioch) shocked even many Protestant delegates when he not merely called for "dialogue" with these religions, but left the Church of Christ far behind and trampled on 19 centuries of Christian tradition when he called on Christians to "investigate

the authentically spiritual life of the unbaptized" and enrich their own experience with the "riches of a universal religious community" (Religious News Service), for "it is Christ alone who is received as light when grace visits a Brahman, a Buddhist, or a Moslem reading his own scriptures" (*Christian Century,* Feb. 10, 1971).

It is thus clear that the notion of a "dialogue" with non-Christian religions is "in the air," has become a part of the intellectual fashion of the day; it seems to be indeed the next step for ecumenism in its progress toward a universal religious syncretism. What is the meaning of this "dialogue" for those who wish to remain Orthodox Christians? What is the Orthodox answer to it? The following three articles are offered as an approach to these questions. The first, on the Near Eastern religions with which Christian ecumenists hope to unite on the basis of "monotheism," approaches the subject theologically, inasmuch as the most fundamental divergence of these religions from Orthodox Christianity occurs precisely in their doctrine of God. The second and longest article, on the most powerful of the Eastern religions, Hinduism, approaches the subject both theologically and on the basis of a long personal experience which ended in the author's conversion from Hinduism to Orthodox Christianity; it gives also an interesting appraisal of the meaning for *Hinduism* of the "dialogue with Christianity." The third article is a personal account of the meeting of an Orthodox priest-monk with an Eastern "miracle-worker" — a direct confrontation of Christian and non-Christian "spirituality." From these articles an answer will emerge to what should be the central concern of the ecumenists' "dialogue" with the non-Christian religions: *who* is the "father," the "god," that attracts and promises to unite you to those who do not accept Christ, our God and Saviour?

I. DO WE HAVE THE SAME GOD THAT NON-CHRISTIANS HAVE?

By Father Basile Sakkas
Swiss Orthodox Mission of St. Nectarios, Geneva

"The Hebrew and Islamic peoples, and Christians... these three expressions of an identical monotheism, speak with the most authentic and ancient, and even the boldest and most confident voices. Why should it not be possible that the name of the same God, instead of engendering irreconcilable opposition, should lead rather to mutual respect, understanding and peaceful coexistence? Should the reference to the same God, the same Father, without prejudice to theological discussion, not lead us rather one day to discover what is so evident, yet so difficult — that we are all sons of the same Father, and that, therefore, we are all brothers?"

Pope Paul VI, *La Croix,* Aug. 11, 1970

A "DIALOGUE" WITH NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS?

ON THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 1970, a great religious manifestation took place in Geneva. Within the framework of the Second Conference of the "Association of United Religions," the representatives of ten great religions were invited to gather in the Cathedral of Saint Peter. This "common prayer" was based on the following motivation: "The faithful of all these religions were invited to coexist in *the cult of the same God*"! Let us then see if this assertion is valid in the light of the Holy Scriptures.

In order better to explain the matter, we shall limit ourselves to the three religions that have historically followed each other in this order: Judaism, Christianity, Islam. These three religions lay claim, in fact, to a common origin: as worshippers of the God of Abraham. Thus it is a very widespread opinion that since we all lay claim to the posterity of Abraham (the Jews and Moslems according to the flesh, and Christians spiritually), we all have as God the God of Abraham and all three of us worship (each in his own way, naturally) the *same God*! And this same God constitutes in some fashion our point of unity and of "mutual understanding," and this invites us to a "fraternal relation," as the Grand Rabbi Dr. Safran emphasized, paraphrasing the Psalm: "Oh, how good it is to see brethren seated together..."

In this perspective it is evident that Jesus Christ, God and Man, the Son Co-eternal with the Father without Beginning, His Incarnation, His Cross, His Glorious Resurrection and His Second and Terrible Coming — become secondary details which cannot prevent us from "fraternizing" with those who consider Him as "a simple prophet" (according to the Koran) or as "the son of a prostitute" (according to certain Talmudic traditions)! Thus we would place Jesus of Nazareth and Mohammed on the same level. I do not know what Christian worthy of the name could admit this in his conscience.

One might say that in these three religions, passing over the past, one could agree that Jesus Christ is an extraordinary and exceptional being and that He was sent by God. But for us Christians, if Jesus Christ is not *God,* we cannot consider Him either as a "prophet" or as one "sent by God," but only as a great imposter without compare, having proclaimed Himself "Son of God," making Himself thus *equal* to God! (St. Mark 14: 61, 62.) According to this ecumenical solution on the supra-confessional level, the Trinitarian God of Christians would be the same thing as the monotheism of Judaism, of Islam, of the ancient heretic Sabellius, of the modern anti-Trinitarians, and of certain Illuminist sects. There would not be *Three Persons in a Single Divinity,* but a single Person, unchanging for some, or successively

changing "masks" (Father-Son-Spirit) for others! And nonetheless one would pretend that this was the "*same God*"!

Here some might naively propose: "Yet for the three religions there is a common point: all three confess *God the Father*! But according to the Holy Orthodox Faith, this is an absurdity. We confess always: "Glory to the Holy, Consubstantial, Life-giving and *Indivisible* Trinity." How could we separate the *Father* from the *Son* when Jesus Christ affirms *I am in the Father, and the Father in Me* (St. John 14: 11), and *I and the Father are One* (St. John 10: 30); and St. John the Apostle, Evangelist, and Theologian, the Apostle of Love, clearly affirms: *Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father* (I John 2: 23).

But even if all three of us call God *Father*: of whom is He really the Father? For the Jews and the Moslems He is the Father of men in the plane of *creation*; while for us Christians He is *the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ* (II Cor. 1: 3, etc.), and we become His sons *in Jesus Christ* by *adoption* (Eph. 1: 4, 5) in the plane of *redemption.* What resemblance is there, then, between the Divine Paternity in Christianity and in the other religions?

Others might say: "But all the same, Abraham worshipped the true God; and the Jews through Isaac and the Moslems through Hagar are the descendents of this true worshipper of God." Here one will have to make several things clear: Abraham worshipped God not at all in the form of the unipersonal monotheism of the others, but in the form of the Holy Trinity. We read in the Holy Scripture: *And the Lord appeared unto him at the Oaks of Mamre... and he bowed himself toward the ground* (Gen. 18: 1, 2). Under what form did Abraham worship God? Under the unipersonal form, or under the form of the Divine Tri-unity? We Orthodox Christians venerate this Old Testament manifestation of the Holy Trinity on the Day of Pentecost, when we adorn our churches with boughs representing the ancient oaks, and when we venerate in their midst the icon of the Three Angels, just as our father Abraham venerated it! Carnal descent from Abraham can be of no use to us if we are not regenerated by the waters of Baptism in the Faith of Abraham. And the Faith of Abraham was the Faith in Jesus Christ, as the Lord Himself has said: *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it and was glad* (St. John 8: 56). Such also was the Faith of the Prophet-King David, who heard the Heavenly Father speaking to His Consubstantial Son: *The Lord said unto my Lord* (Ps. 109: 1; Acts 2: 34). Such was the Faith of the Three Youths in the fiery furnace when they were saved by the *Son of God* (Dan. 3: 25); and of the holy Prophet Daniel, who had the Vision of the two natures of Jesus Christ in the Mystery of the In-

carnation when the Son of Man came to the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7: 13). This is why the Lord, addressing the (biologically incontestable) posterity of Abraham, said. *If ye were the children of Abraham, ye would do the works of Abraham* (St. John 8: 39), and these "works" are to *believe on Him Whom God hath sent* (St. John 6: 29).

Who then are the *posterity* of Abraham? The sons of Isaac according to the flesh, or the sons of Hagar the Egyptian? Is Isaac or Ishmael the posterity of Abraham? What does the Holy Scripture teach by the mouth of the divine Apostle? *Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed: which is Christ* (Gal. 3:16). *And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise* (Gal. 3: 29). It is then in Jesus Christ that Abraham became *a father of many nations* (Gen. 17: 5; Rom. 4: 17). After such promises and such certainties, what meaning does carnal descent from Abraham have? According to Holy Scripture, Isaac is considered as the *seed* or *posterity,* but only as *the image of Jesus Christ.* As opposed to Ishmael (the son of Hagar; Gen. 16: 1ff), Isaac was born in the miraculous "freedom" of a sterile mother, in old age and against the laws of nature, similar to our Saviour, Who was miraculously born of a Virgin. He climbed the hill of Moriah just as Jesus climbed Calvary, bearing on his shoulders the wood of sacrifice. An angel delivered Isaac from death, just as an angel rolled away the stone to show us that the tomb was empty, that the Risen One was no longer there. At the hour of prayer, Isaac met Rebecca in the plain and led her into the tent of his mother Sarah, just as Jesus shall meet His Church on the clouds in order to bring Her into the heavenly mansions, the New Jerusalem, the much-desired homeland.

No! We do not in the least have the same God that non-Christians have! The *sine qua non* for knowing the Father, is the Son: *He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me* (St. John 14: 6, 9). Our God is a God Incarnate, *Whom we have seen with our eyes, and our hands have touched* (I John 1: 1). The immaterial became material for our salvation, as St. John Damascene says, and He has *revealed* Himself in us. But when did He reveal Himself among the present-day Jews and Moslems, so that we might suppose that they know God? If they have a knowledge of God outside of Jesus Christ, then Christ was incarnate, died, and rose in vain!

No, they do *not* know the Father. They have *conceptions* about the Father; but every conception about God is an *idol,* because a conception is the product of our imagination, a creation of a god in our own image and like-

ness. For us Christians God is *inconceivable, incomprehensible, indescribable* and *immaterial,* as St. Basil the Great says. For our salvation He became (to the extent that we are united to Him) conceived, described, and material, by *revelation* in the Mystery of the Incarnation of His Son. *To Him be the Glory unto the ages of ages. Amen.* And this is why St. Cyprian of Carthage affirms that he who does not have the Church for Mother, does not have God for Father!

May God preserve us from the Apostasy and from the coming of Antichrist, the preliminary signs of which are multiplying from day to day. May He preserve us from the great affliction which even the elect would not be able to bear without the Grace of Him Who will cut short these days. And may He preserve us in the "small flock," the "remainder according to the election of Grace," so that we like Abraham might rejoice at the Light of His Face, by the prayers of the Most Holy Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, of all the heavenly hosts, the cloud of witnesses, prophets, martyrs, hierarchs, evangelists, and confessors who have been faithful unto death, who have shed their blood for Christ, who have begotten us by the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the waters of Baptism. We are their sons — weak, sinful, and unworthy, to be sure; but we will not stretch forth our hands toward *a strange god!* Amen.

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